

Chicago Fire Media Conference

Thursday, June 22, 2023
Chicago, Illinois, USA

Frank Klopas Press Conference

Chicago Fire FC 2, Portland 1

Q. Thanks for the highly entertaining late-night event for us, kept us all awake very easily. Complete performance, just curious your thoughts overall and of course, this team struggled early in the year with giving up these late goals, so seeing your side defensively strongly at the end including the save from Chris with the kick save at the end.

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, listen, I think we talked about it in this break that second half of the season, things that we needed to focus on and things that needed to be in our control, that's the most important thing.

More than anything, we need to game-by-game improve, but it all starts on the training pitch. We had an opportunity to work for the first time in a long time and work on certain phases of the game, both from the attacking standpoint and defensively.

And then look, we know it's going to be another tough stretch, and coming out here in Portland, really difficult place to play against a very good team.

The guys came out, and I talked to the group beforehand. It's just come out with energy, intensity, confidence. I think that was very important. I sticking together, supporting each other, and then just leaving everything on the field. I felt it was a really, really good performance.

I think for me, even when they tied, we found a way to get that second goal. The guys came in, and if you want to win, a lot of times, it's not the guys that really start the game. I think the impact really made from the guys that you bring on the pitch with the sub that you make, and all the guys stepped in, and they did a great job.

But it was a total team performance tonight, massive, massive win for us, and we just have to continue. Because like I said, now we fly to Kansas, difficult match there, and then to Orlando and then finally we can get back home with



some games.

Q. Seemed like Gastón Giménez had a great match tonight. His feeds over the top were just really timed well. Is that something you guys have been focusing on more with him in terms of both his service in-play, and then, of course, with Shaq out of the team on international duty, focusing on him from set pieces as well?

FRANK KLOPAS: Yeah, the thing with Gastón, when he gets the ball and we have time on the ball, we always need runs behind. I think he's an excellent passer, short, long-range passes. Today, yeah, it's a great performance and that's the kind of Gastón that we need for our club and for the team.

It was just massive. He played with a lot of confidence, a lot of responsibility, and you know, I mean, his ability now to make passes to kind of dictate the tempo of the game, to give the game rhythm, and then also to be more dangerous in a final third. He's got great quality to make passes.

For me, one of the things that I stressed on him is his ability now to take more responsibility in the final third, finish shots off himself. Take shots; he's got a great left foot, and I never see him taking any shots. He was massive tonight.

But I think as a whole collectively as a team, we played really well and I think that's important when you get a result like this on the road. You know, you look at the performances of guys, and I can honestly tell you that everybody, we had an excellent performance, and that's what it takes.

Q. Prior to tonight, the Fire had never won in Portland. In fact, they had never, ever beaten the Timbers in MLS. What does an important win like that mean in the context of the season?

FRANK KLOPAS: Like I said, thank you, yeah, good question. I just think that I talked to the group and we stressed a lot the second half of the season, and the things that we need to focus on and the things that are in our control, and how can we improve collectively but also individually. I think that's been the key.



So you come on the road. We knew that the next three games are going to be, and we need to find points somewhere. We talked about that when you drop points at home, now you have to go into difficult places which is not easy in this league and get a result.

Look, from the standpoint that, yeah, first time in club history that we won here, you know, it just tells you how difficult a place it is to come and get a result, and that's why a performance like this was needed, a total performance, which we had tonight.

And now, it's like you have to enjoy these moments, and now we just have to travel to KC tomorrow. Regroup, see how the guys are doing, and just be excited to play the next game and see how we can improve and be even better.

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